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(54) Title: **RANDOM TRANSPOSON INSERTION IN STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS AND USE THEREOF TO IDENTIFY ESSENTIAL GENES**

(57) **Abstract:** The invention provides a method for generating a database of candidate essential genes in *Staphylococcus aureus*, as well as otherwise important genes that, when mutated, lead to a growth attenuated phenotype. Such genes and mutants of such genes are important for identifying antibacterial agents suitable for treating and preventing *S. aureus* infections. The invention includes methods for confirming the essentiality or importance of candidate genes, as well as methods for utilizing those genes to screen for new antibacterial drugs. The invention also includes the antibacterial agents identified using the disclosed methods, as well as methods of using the same for treating and preventing *Staphylococcus* infection.

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